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Society might remember that, in 1854, Lord Dalhousie tried to make a road from Simla towards Gartok, with the object of opening an overland route to China from India. But the road was not carried on, partly on account of the want of funds, and for other reasons. When he was in the Punjab he endeavoured to continue the road, the object being to strike the royal road between Lhasa and Ilchi, so as to enable traffic to come direct from China to India, avoiding the roundabout course through Ladak and Cashmere, and thus turn the flank of Cashmere, and so escape the heavy duties which were levied on goods coming through that country. The road was not completed, and still remains unfinished, for want of funds; but three-fourths of it have been made between Simla and Gartok. As time passed, they hoped to get funds sufficient to complete the road; and he thought the recent discovery of the Pundits would induce the authorities to go on with that road. The President had kindly credited him with having been instrumental in the employment of the Pundits. All that he had to do with the system was this. When Captain Montgomerie first commenced sending natives into the interior, he (Sir R. Montgomery) procured for him a man in 1863, who went up to Yarkand and made observations. He believed he was the first native who accomplished such a journey. Subsequently, Captain Montgomerie adopted the plan of employing Pundits, and he had no doubt that, hereafter, we should receive very important information from these men.

Sir ANDREW WAUGH said that he had the honour of having trained Captain Montgomerie originally as an Indian surveyor, and he was naturally proud of his present achievements. He must accord to him the entire credit of having originated this system of employing native agents. Captain Montgomerie was one of his favourite officers, and belonged to his staff, and he had proved himself so worthy that the Society had awarded him their gold medal. He might remark that surveys of routes in these stupenduous mountain regions were exceedingly difficult, requiring great skill, caution, and scrupulous care to prevent the intrusion of large errors. For the Pundits to close their survey with an ascertained error of only two miles and a half in so long a mountainous circuit, showed not only that dependence was to be placed in their accuracy, but also that they had been trained on right principles. He was sure Captain Montgomerie would carry this enterprise still further, and that we should yet receive even more interesting accounts of still more *terræ reclusæ*.

The PRESIDENT believed that the award of a gold watch to the first Pundit, in 1868, had been productive of much advantage. He hoped, before another year was over, the Council would have to vote an additional honorary distinction.

2. *On the Transit of Tea from North-West India to Eastern Turkestan.*

By T. DOUGLAS FORSYTH, Esq., F.R.G.S.

THIS communication consisted of a letter addressed to the President of the Society by Mr. Forsyth, with an enclosure from Mr. Shaw, who is now engaged in a commercial undertaking to the capital of Eastern Turkestan:—

“ My DEAR SIR,

“ Jullundur, 26th February, 1869.

“ As you will be anxious to hear of the progress of Lieutenant Hayward, whom you have sent out on an expedition to Yarkand, I send herewith the copy of a letter just received from Mr. R. Shaw

to his sister, who has placed it at my disposal. Mr. Shaw is the first Englishman who has ever sent a letter from that country to us, and, with the exception of Mr. Johnson, the first Englishman who has ever been in Eastern Turkestan, and lived to let us know about the land. I trust his life may be spared, and then I have no doubt that we shall soon see trade communication freely established between the two countries.

“The path for Mr. Shaw’s entry was carefully prepared. When I was at Leh last September, I sent a horse-load of tea with a letter to the Kooshbegi, telling him that this was only a sample of what could be supplied in larger quantities from the Indian tea-plantations. At the same time the Kooshbegi was asked to receive favourably a caravan of traders, who went with the Vakeel who had my letter. In this caravan was one of Mr. Shaw’s servants, who took presents from his master to the Kooshbegi. Mr. Shaw himself followed about three weeks afterwards, and waited at the confines of Turkestan for news from his servant. He received encouragement to proceed, and his letter tells the rest. Further information, as soon as it is received by me, shall be sent to you.

“Mr. Hayward’s approach, it appears, was *not* made smooth beforehand, and, as the people of that country are naturally suspicious, they have hindered his advance. No personal injury, however, will, I trust and believe, be done to him, for the Kooshbegi is evidently desirous of entering into friendly relations with us.

“I have to thank you exceedingly for the very kind letter you have sent me, and for the flattering notice which you are good enough to bestow on my humble efforts to open out trade with Turkestan. I can truly say that, in setting this task before me, I have been actuated by no idea of Russophobia, and, in justice to myself, I hope you will allow me to explain that recent allusions by me to possible complications with Russia have been greatly misunderstood by the English press.

“I will not enlarge on this subject, which is foreign to the commercial and scientific question with which alone the Royal Geographical Society concerns itself, but I owe it to you, as our distinguished President, no less than to myself, to say that, because the impression had got firmly fixed in people’s minds that my efforts to open out this trade were utterly futile on account of the impassable character of the Himalayas, I ventured to show how very easy the passage by the Changchenmo route really is. You, doubtless, know that the province of Ladak has been invaded ere now by a Kalmuck army passing over this route.

“Having but one object in view—the furtherance of trade and

the advance of science—I desire to pursue the subject with single earnestness of purpose; and it is, indeed, a high honour and reward to receive words of encouragement from the President of our Society.

“The great interest which Lord Mayo takes in the subject is a guarantee that this interesting country will not much longer remain a sealed book to us.

“I may add, that Mr. Shaw is one of our most enterprising settlers in the Kangra Valley. After receiving an University education, he came out to India to set up as a tea-planter. From the time when we commenced to make efforts for taking advantage of the expulsion of the Chinese to open communications with Yarkand, Mr. Shaw has evinced the utmost practical interest in the subject, and I am personally indebted to him for valuable information and important help. This year, when he announced to Dr. Cayley and me his determination to visit Yarkand, I honestly confess that I did my utmost to dissuade him from running what was considered by so many a fearful risk. To him, therefore, rather than to any one else, will be due all the credit of success, should we hereafter find our mercantile relations with Yarkand established on a sound basis.

“Even if Mr. Hayward should fail to penetrate into those regions, I feel sure that your Society will, ere long, receive most valuable and reliable information regarding them from one whom I am glad to be able to call my friend.

“I am, my dear Sir,

“Yours, very faithfully,

“T. DOUGLAS FORSYTH.

“Sir R. Murchison, Bart., &c., &c.”

Copy of Letter from Mr. R. Shaw to his Sister at Lahore.

“Camp near Sanju, Turkestan, Nov. 28th, 1868.

“I AM within a few days of Yarkand, having crossed the last pass on my road yesterday (the 11th since leaving Dhurmsala). I am being received in the most handsome manner. A swell Moghul came as far as Shahdulla Khoja (beyond the pass) to meet me. I was detained there eighteen days for orders from the King. The delay was chiefly caused by the arrival (most inopportune) of a second Englishman. However, on the 20th, we left Shahdulla, and to-day have been met by the Governor of Yarkand’s brother, who has been sent to meet me as Mihmandar, with a large camp. Guns

were fired, and I was escorted in state to a Kirghiz tent (*see* Atkinson's 'Siberia' for description). I was ushered in, made to sit alone in the place of honour, on the carpet at the far end, while my Mihmandar sat on a side carpet. He gave me the most complimentary welcome from his King, saying that he was sent simply in order to facilitate my journey and consult my wishes. I paid him a return visit at his tent, and in departing was clothed with a silk robe. I must tell you that I now dress entirely as a Turkee, turban, robe, and everything. He excused himself for the want of proper presents out in the jungle, saying otherwise I should have received a horse, &c.

"None of my servants are allowed to go on foot; even the Tibetan coolies are mounted on yaks. I have picked up some knowledge of Turkee, and hope to improve in it during the winter.

"In fine, you may consider that I am about as well off as I could be, were my utmost wishes realised in the present matter. All my goods, too, have been taken over by the King's people, who are to give the price. The tea will fetch about 8 rupees per pound, as far as I can make out. It is much liked. Unfortunately, half my caravan, which was following me, has either wandered off towards China or gone to Khoten by mistake.*

"The apples and pears are delicious here, after a long desert journey. A lot of fruit and a sheep are given me every day, and I have now a large flock, though all my servants are sated with meat. They, too, are gorgeously clothed. This letter will go inside a bag of flour with the return Tibetan yak-drivers; for my hosts, although most polite, are very suspicious of letters in unknown tongues. I am afraid the other Englishman, Hayward, who is sent by the Royal Geographical Society, but has not prepared his way as I have, will not be allowed to come on. He is kept under guard at Shahdulla, and we were not allowed to communicate."

The PRESIDENT, in calling for observations on the adventurous and successful undertaking of Mr. Shaw, said he would take this opportunity of correcting a misapprehension into which many persons had been led respecting some prior observations on this route by Sir Henry Rawlinson. All that Sir Henry meant was, that there was a road across the Himalaya and Kuen-lun available for camels and yaks, without very great difficulty; and this had been taken as an admission that this route was practicable for an army.

Sir HENRY RAWLINSON said he had the honour on a previous occasion to notice the opening out of this particular road, which was now generally

* The man in charge lost his way and returned to Ladak. He has since written to tell me of his making a fresh start to join his master.—T. D. F.

known as the Changchenmo route, and to be the most direct and easiest route between Ladak and Turkestan. Judging from the information then available, he certainly said the physical difficulties of the route were very much less than those of any other, and that it promised to be a valuable line for commerce. At the same time he said he considered such a route was impracticable to an army. To move a caravan consisting of a few mules and camels was a very different thing from moving an army with a commissariat. He had been met on that point by the statement that in former times armies had marched without great difficulty from Kashgar to Cashmere, in fact that one of the kings of Kashgar had died at Cashmere. He must reply to that by saying that the passage of the flying hordes which, in former days, swept over Asia, led by Mogul emperors, had no analogy to the movements of armies in the present day. Those flying hordes never carried a commissariat, and never required one. There was one point in Mr. Shaw's journey which he wished to refer to, and this was that a portion of the route he travelled over was absolutely new to us. When on the former occasion he described Mr. Forsyth's route, he was not aware that Dr. Cayley had himself travelled over the whole distance from Leh to the Karakash River. But he was now in possession of Dr. Cayley's Report, with an excellent map of his journey; and had received from him, since he had returned to England, a description of his journey in detail. Dr. Cayley, who was our agent at Ladak, in September last year, travelled along this route by the Changchenmo route to the Karakash. Here began the difficulties. When Mr. Johnson went to Ilchi he crossed the great range by two very difficult passes; but he heard that there was a route down the banks of the river. Dr. Cayley travelled to the same point, but was unable to go down the river. Mr. Shaw had now accomplished this. He travelled by the Changchenmo route as far as the upper waters of the Karakash, and then he followed the banks of the river to Shadula. He found this road an easy one. Hitherto, he believed, no one had followed the Karakash River down into the plain of Tartary. Dr. Cayley had informed him that where the route left the river it was quite impossible for any traveller to keep to the bed of the stream. The only means of entering the plain was by crossing a saddle on the west of the Karakash River, called the Sanju Pass. With respect to Mr. Hayward, he still hoped that that gentleman might succeed in getting forward, and that he would send us some very valuable information. Regarding trade, it was interesting to hear that Mr. Shaw sold his tea at 16s. per lb. Considering that the same tea could be purchased in England at 2s. 6d. per lb., 16s. per lb. was a tempting bait to traders. Unfortunately, as we learned from the Pundit's paper, the Thibetans did not like Himalayan tea, they preferred China tea. It should also be borne in mind that our merchants in taking tea to Yarkand would meet with very great competition on the part of Russia, who was doing all she could to extend her trade. He thought it was all the better for our merchants that they should have to meet competition rather than that they should go into a market with unlimited control.

Captain SHERARD OSBORN congratulated the Society upon the steady way in which, by pundits, travellers, or by tea-merchants, we were getting rid of another of those bugbears, the so-called impenetrable geographical barriers of the world—the Himalayas. Some years ago a Russian officer asked him if the English had not put a good many thousand feet on to the Himalayas, and created a good many difficulties there, for political purposes. He began to think that there was some grounds for the question, and that we should find, as we went on exploring, that where there were routes available for yaks, ponies, and horses, there would soon be found others fit for all commercial purposes. It struck him that the line of the Russian territory, which he held was the line of civilisation, would come down southward and obliterate that

Mahomedan barbarism which had been the real impenetrable barrier in Central Asia. The Russians would come down as a natural law, and the sooner we recognised that fact, and the sooner we got rid of all our fears respecting the extension of Russia, the better for the world and for us.

Eleventh Meeting, April 26th, 1869.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, BART., K.C.B., PRESIDENT,
in the Chair.

PRESENTATION.—*Frederick H. Leaf, Esq.*

ELECTIONS.—*E. C. Bowra, Esq.; Frederick T. Galsworthy, Esq.; C. T. Gardner, Esq.; Edward J. Leveson, Esq.*

ACCESSIONS TO THE LIBRARY FROM APRIL 12TH TO 26TH, 1869.
By Purchase.—Chardin, ‘Voyage en Perse.’ 10 vols. Paris, 1811. Cordiner’s ‘Ceylon.’ 2 vols. 1807. Cunningham’s ‘Cosmographical Glass,’ 1559. D’Anville, ‘Carte de l’Inde,’ 1753. D’Anville, ‘États en Europe.’ 1771. Davison’s ‘Africa.’ 1839. 60 Tracts relating to Dutch Possessions in the Indian Archipelago. 1799 to 1847. Engelmann’s ‘Bibliotheca Geographica.’ Hoffmeister’s ‘Ceylon,’ 1848. ‘Missione alla Cocincina.’ Roma, 1631. ‘La Bissachere Tunkin.’ 2 vols. 1812. Mann’s ‘Mer Noir,’ &c. 1778-79. Marryat’s ‘Borneo,’ 1848. Osbeck’s ‘China,’ 1771. Prevost’s ‘Collection des Voyages.’ 19 vols. 1746-70. Seemann’s ‘Viti,’ 1862. Shenvocke, ‘Voyage Round the World,’ 1726. Temminck, ‘L’Inde Archipel.’ 3 vols. 1846-49. ‘Viaggi di tre Francesi.’ 1669. Pertusier, ‘La Bosnie.’ 1822. Fortis ‘Dalmatia,’ 1778. Gamba’s ‘La Russie,’ 1826. ‘Histoire de la Moldavie.’ 1781. Ardouin’s ‘Haiti.’ 2 vols. 1853. J. E. Tennent’s ‘Natural History of Ceylon.’ 1861. Von der Decken’s ‘Reisen in Ost-Afrika.’ 1869.

By Donation.—Carl Zimmermann’s ‘Chiwa.’ Berlin, 1840. By W. Spottiswoode, Esq. ‘Dualla Language of the Camaroons River.’ The same.

ACCESSIONS TO MAP-ROOM SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF APRIL 12TH.—Carte lithologique des Mers de France, &c. Par M. Delesse, Professeur à l’École des Mines. Presented by Sir R. I. Murchison, Bart., President. Map of the Eastern Part of Abyssinia, showing the Route of the British Army in 1867-8 from Annesley Bay to Mágdala. By Dr. A. Petermann. Presented by the author. A large Map of China in 32 Sections (in Chinese characters). Presented by J. S. Coys, Esq., F.R.G.S. Two Diagrams, showing the Surface

Temperature, &c., of the North Atlantic Ocean, for the month of January, during the years 1849-52. By N. Whitley, Esq.

The following Papers were read:—

1. *Recent Explorations in the Peninsula of Sinai.*
By the Rev. F. W. HOLLAND.

THE project of a systematic survey of the Peninsula of Sinai owes its origin to the Rev. Mr. Pierce Butler, late Rector of Ulcombe, Kent; and although he himself was not spared to aid in carrying out that project, to which he had devoted so much energy and thought, to him we are mainly indebted that a well organised expedition, under the superintendence of the Director-General of the Ordnance Survey, is now engaged in making explorations in that most interesting country.

I much regret that the present session of the Royal Geographical Society will have come nearly to an end before the return of the officers in command of that expedition, and that they themselves will therefore not have an opportunity of laying before you the result of their work.

But such being the case, having had the advantage of working with them during the first three months that they spent in the Peninsula, and having had access to their reports and letters home since that time, I have ventured to record in the following Paper the progress that has been made.

There are many people, I believe, who have concluded that the Peninsula of Sinai must *already* have been a well explored country, since so many travellers have visited it, and so many books have been written about it; but, owing to various local causes, there is probably no other country in which travellers have been led to carry out more fully their ovine propensity to follow exactly in each other's steps; and, consequently, it is only the *main* wadys, or valleys, which form the high-roads, and one or two of the principal mountains, that have been explored, and even those very hastily and incompletely. There can be no doubt, too, that the religious enthusiasm which has led many travellers to the country, however much it may claim our sympathy, has nevertheless tended in a very great degree to lower the value of the information obtained. A man who goes out with foregone conclusions as to what the country *ought* to be, and where the Children of Israel *ought* to have marched, is almost sure to favour his own prejudices to the exclusion of truth.

Thus it happens that although the *coast line* of the Peninsula of